

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1               1. An expression vector, said vector comprising an expression cassette  
2 comprising from 5' to 3' the following elements: a CMV promoter sequence, a CMV  
3 enhancer sequence, a CMV intron A sequence from the CMV major immediate early gene, a  
4 heterologous nucleic acid sequence, and a polyadenylation site, wherein the promoter is  
5 operably linked to the heterologous nucleic acid sequence.

1               2. The expression vector of claim 1, wherein the CMV intron A sequence  
2 has a deletion from about base 1513 to about base 1736.

1               3. The expression vector of claim 1, wherein the heterologous nucleic  
2 acid encodes a cancer antigen.

1               4. The expression vector of claim 1, wherein the expression cassette  
2 comprises nucleotides 54-3675 of the sequence set forth in SEQ ID NO:3.

1               5. An expression vector of claim 1, wherein the expression cassette  
2 comprises nucleotides 1-1653 of the sequence set forth in SEQ ID NO:3.

1               6. The expression vector of claim 1, wherein the expression cassette  
2 comprises the sequence set forth in SEQ ID NO:3.

1               7. The expression vector of claim 3, wherein the cancer antigen is  
2 encoded by the nucleotide sequence set forth in SEQ ID NO:6.

1               8. A host cell comprising the expression vector of claim 1.

1               9. A host cell comprising the expression vector of claim 4.

1               10. A host cell comprising the expression vector of claim 5.

1           11. A host cell comprising the expression vector of claim 6.

1           12. The host cell of claim 8, wherein the host cell is selected from the  
2 group consisting of *E. coli* and mammalian cells.

1           13. The host cell of claim 9, wherein the host cell is selected from the  
2 group consisting of *E. coli* and mammalian cells.

1           14. The host cell of claim 11, wherein the host cell is selected from the  
2 group consisting of *E. coli* and mammalian cells.

1           15. A composition comprising an expression vector as set forth in claim 1.

1           16. A method for expressing a heterologous nucleic acid sequence, the  
2 method comprising culturing a host cell comprising an expression vector, said vector  
3 comprising an expression cassette comprising from 5' to 3' the following elements: a CMV  
4 promoter sequence, a CMV enhancer sequence, a CMV intron A sequence from the CMV  
5 major immediate early gene, a heterologous nucleic acid sequence, and a polyadenylation  
6 site, wherein the promoter is operably linked to the heterologous nucleic acid sequence.

1           17. The method of claim 16, wherein the CMV intron A sequence has a  
2 deletion from about base 1513 to about base 1736.

1           18. The method of claim 16, wherein the heterologous nucleic acid  
2 encodes a cancer antigen.

1           19. The method of claim 16, wherein the expression cassette comprises  
2 nucleotides 54-3675 of the sequence set forth in SEQ ID NO:3.

1           20. The method of claim 16, wherein the expression cassette comprises  
2 nucleotides 1-1653 of the sequence set forth in SEQ ID NO:3.

1               21. The method of claim 16, wherein the expression cassette comprises the  
2 sequence set forth in SEQ ID NO:3.

1               22. The method of claim 16, wherein the host cell is selected from the  
2 group consisting of *E. coli* and mammalian cells.

1               23. The method of claim 18, wherein the cancer antigen is encoded by the  
2 nucleotide sequence set forth in SEQ ID NO:6.

1               24. A method for eliciting an immune response, the method comprising the  
2 steps of administering an immunogenically effective amount of the immunogenic  
3 composition of claim 12 to a subject, wherein the immune response is directed against a  
4 polypeptide encoded by the heterologous nucleic acid sequence.

1               25. The method of claim 24, wherein the immunogenic composition is  
2 administered multiple times.